The Sketch

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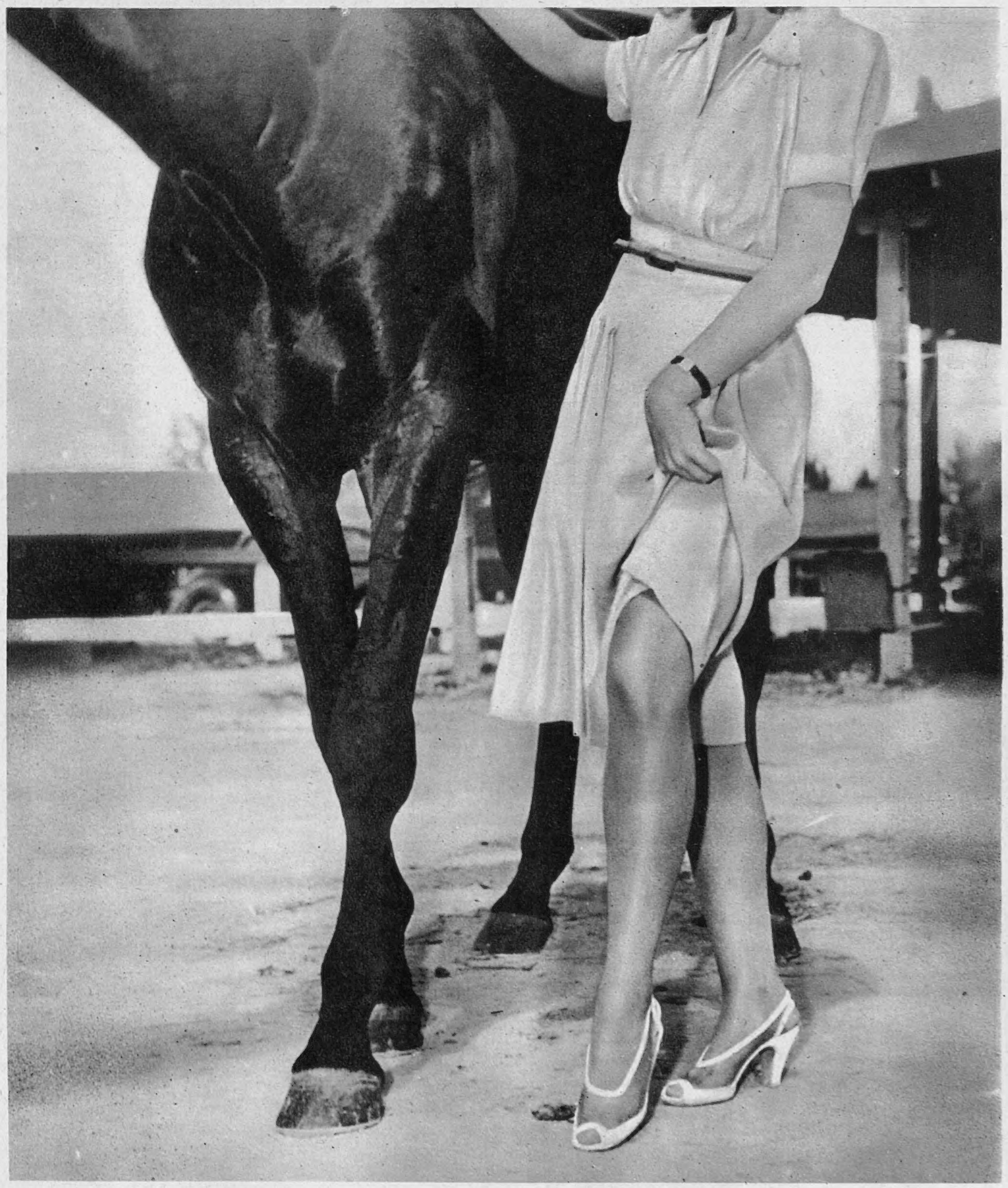


THOROUGHBRED UNDERPINNING!

WHO REIGH *(l.)* and CHARLOTTE LA VALLE *provide a fascinating study in equine and feminine thoroughbred underpinning. Charlotte is a dancer with slender, shapely and graceful legs and ankles, and Who Reigh a class colt who has been carrying his owner's colours to victory at Hialeah Park Race Track. Our photograph hails from Coral Gables, Florida.*

A

MOTLEY NOTES.

By ALAN KEMP.

Nearly Time. To most of us, it is not much satisfaction to know that great minds think alike, because we are not competing in that class; but it is a distinct satisfaction to find great minds concurring in our own simple thoughts and sentiments, and in much the same terms that we ourselves might have used. I fancy, therefore, that General Montgomery strikes a responsive chord in innumerable hearts when he says, in blunt, soldierly terms: "I am getting fed-up with the whole thing. I think it is nearly time we finished it." Can you guess what he is referring to? If, as is highly probable, you can, I think you will say not only "Hear, hear," but perhaps also "Go to it, General!" If you are very young and irreverent, you may even say "Attaboy!" Yes, it is "nearly time"; and although I do not claim to be a strategist, I will say this for myself, that this very same idea struck me long before it seems to have occurred to the General. However, it is not copyright, and Monty has my full permission to make any use of it he chooses.

Rare and Refreshing. And yet it seems ungracious to show any tendency to upfeeding when we enjoy so many blessings. What is this dazzling spectacle on the sideboard which fascinates my gaze? *Can* it be a golden pyramid of oranges? It is, and I don't mean maybe; very good, sweet, plump little oranges, too. And on Shrove Tuesday my pancakes (indistinguishable, I thought, from the shell-egg prototype) were baptised with the *pur sang* of a lemon, all a-growing and a-blowing. It had come from Canada, and was, at that date, a museum piece; but ere long it will have lost its collector's value, since it is to be merely one among 17,000,000—and all at sixpence-halfpenny a pound! Who knows? One of these days we may be able to hang a bunch of bananas from the chandelier as a trophy of victory. Meanwhile, the Belfast carter who was detected feeding oranges to his horse was, in the opinion of the magistrates, over-enthusiastic in his love of Our Dumb Friends. To me, it sounds rather like Lucullus feeding slaves to his lampreys, or Cleopatra melting pearls in wine.

"Since this reading began a new communiqué has come in."

DRAWN BY PITTS.

Coin of the Realm. People are undoubtedly very odd both in the things they waste and the things they hoard. There seem to be a great many human jackdaws about. While some men feed oranges to horses, and others are even criminal enough to feed stale bread to chickens, others collect farthings. It is said that 300,000,000 farthings have disappeared into private hoards. Now, the passion for collecting golden sovereigns, or even Treasury notes, is one which I deprecate, but can understand; but I cannot begin to guess what people do with bags of farthings. Indeed, I have never discovered any practical use to which you can put a farthing; and, intrinsically, it is hardly a thing on which you can doat or gloat, like a rare stamp. They can't *all* go into collection-plates. Apparently, most of them are destined to cross the Atlantic as souvenirs of a quaint, old-world civilisation. A harmless fancy, I dare say, but one which puzzles me—but then, I have never collected anything but cigarette-cards, and that was some time ago, in days when we had a real sense of values.

Do unto Others. Since then, and certainly since the days of William of Wykeham, we seem to have declined somewhat in the social graces. It is one of the most unpleasant aspects of war that some (though by no means all) of those who were wont to fawn upon us are now "over-compensating the inferiority complex" by being as rude as they can as often as they can. It is not, of course, an entirely one-sided matter, and I see that the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of War Transport are both asking for a little more sweet reasonableness from transporters and transportees alike. (Few people realise that "Conduct of Passengers" was a matter of statutory regulation, with penalties, even before the war, but I do not think anything is said about the conduct of conductors.) The late Mrs. Bernard Shaw evidently had decided views on this question, and left a large sum of money for the improvement of social manners. Professor Joad expresses surprise that money should be employed "to enable the many to ape the manners of the aristocratic few." On paper, though I am sure not in his own practical code,

"Compulsory fire-watching I *don't* mind, but I think compulsory fire-fighting training is carrying things a bit too far!" (DRAWN BY SILENUS.)

SALVAGE ALL YOUR OLD LETTERS—FOR VICTORY

Professor Joad seems to suggest that "manners" consist in the way you hold your knife and fork or tilt your little finger. I think William of Wykeham, unlike Lord Chesterfield, conceived them rather differently. They are not only lubrications of life, but the outward expression of a whole attitude towards others. A gentleman has never been better defined than as "one who is never unintentionally rude."

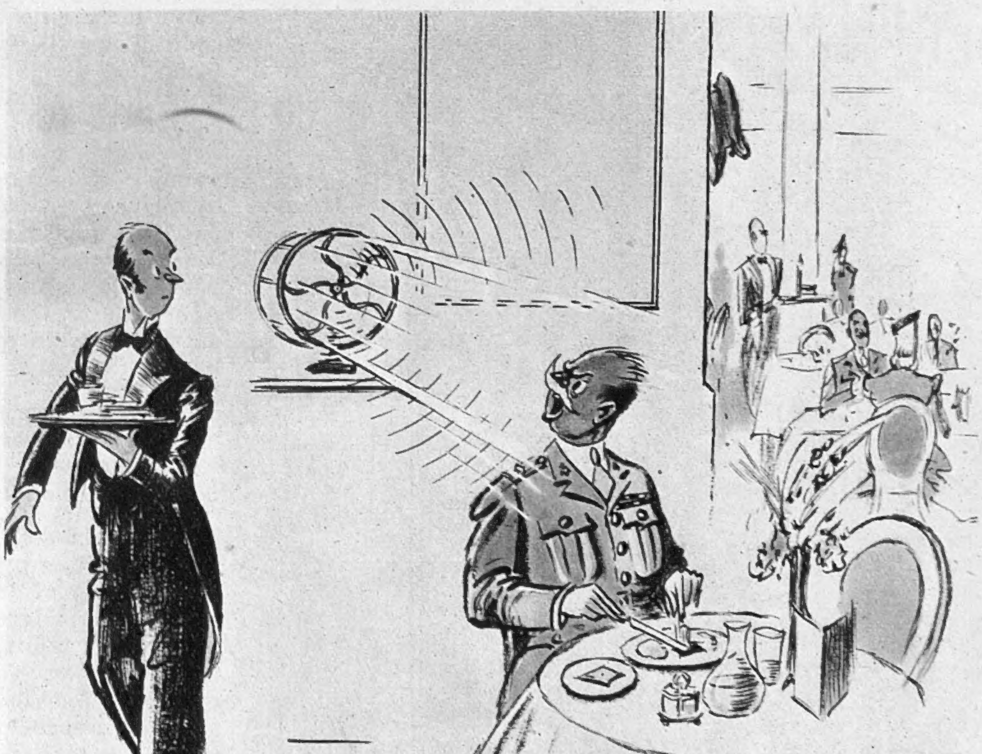
Thug of War. It would take a very large benefaction indeed, and a very long time, to teach manners to some of the Bright Boys who are the despair of all disciplinary authorities. Is it just one of the freakish by-products of war that two infants should break and enter, steal rifles and ammunition, and then open up a barrage and defy a whole regiment to dislodge them from a mountain fastness in Wales? We hear a lot about the harshness, or the sentimentality (according to the point of view) of Juvenile Courts. Will any educationist, moralist, psychologist or penologist kindly tell me the proper way to deal with embryo gangsters of this kind, who might well have had half-a-dozen murders on their hands? I can think of nothing but to drop them by parachute in an occupied country as recruits for the guerillas. Somebody has recently suggested that the stocks should be revived for bicycle-thieves. Perhaps this would be the right method for any young toughs—at least, it would prevent them from becoming heroes, which is the worst danger in cases like theirs.

The New Cannibalism. I wonder whether these merry larks are just part of the general demoralising influence of war, or whether youthful savagery is not a result of reckless indulgence in vegetables? Vegetarians are well known to be "terrors when roused," and elephants, bulls, rhinoceroses, dinosaurs and other formidable animals grow very bloodthirsty on a diet of greenstuffs. Can it be that we are cultivating a breed of fierce, untamed young herbivores? Scientists are openly boasting that children are devouring with relish not merely cod-liver oil, milk and orange-juice, but shredded cabbage, raw beetroot, beans, peas and swedes, not to mention "toffee carrots." Children may now be seen stalking mangel-wurzels in the fields, falling upon them ferociously, and gnawing them with horrible animal noises (*Völkischer Beobachter* please copy). Well, very likely it is all very health-giving and body-building, all very effective against rickets, scurvy, leprosy and halitosis—but *morally*, all I say is: look at the results! Would youths gently nurtured on beefsteak and pork chops shoot up an entire county? I cannot think so.

"Are you sure we're only twenty thousand feet?" (DRAWN BY PITTS.)

Mental Cruelty.

But I do not wish to be hard on my youngers and betters, and I am not in favour, as a general policy, of grinding the young to dust. Great as the temptation sometimes is, I cannot applaud the sentiments of the late King Herod in this matter. The young have troubles of their own with which I deeply sympathise; and I read with warm approval a letter in the Sunday paper asking why we persist in tormenting helpless little victims with the form of persecution called mathematics. Let it be granted that the third "R" must go along with the other two in elementary education; let it even be granted that some glimpse of the austere reasoning of Euclid is a good discipline in logic; but why drive children who have no taste or talent for them into the wilderness of quadratics and cubic roots and all those forms of perverted ingenuity which merely plague, without developing, the budding intelligence? I hate the word "practical" in connection with education, but there must be some reasonable calculation of profit and loss in it, and for the hours of anguish I spent in this forced labour, when all my interests lay elsewhere, I have never discovered any profit whatever. By the worship of this fetish many young students are quite needlessly brought to grief, and I suggest that the subject might well engage the attention not only of parents and schoolmasters, but of the N.S.P.C.C.



"For heaven's sake turn off that fan before this beefsteak blows away!"

DRAWN BY L. B. MARTIN.

Would They Smell as Sweet? Another grievance which the young have always had is that they have no control over the names with which they are labelled for life. I once knew a man whose nature had obviously been warped throughout life by being christened Isaiah Eliphalet, and as his surname was Grubb, I think he had a legitimate grievance against his parents. During this war, however, austerity seems to rule even at the font. The Johns lead the field easily, with Michael and David running strongly and a good entry of Richard, Peter and Anthony. Bill, Tom, Jim, Alf and Albert are mere also-rans, and Percy, Algernon, Marmaduke and Adolphus absolute non-starters. There are not even many Winstons, Franklins or Montgomerys. Ann is an easy winner among

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Continued.]
the girls, with some competition from Mary and Elizabeth, and occasionally a little flourish from Jennifer, Patricia and Maureen. I observe, too, that the utility principle has affected even the Amateur Boxing Association. It has placed a ban on such affectionate sobriquets as "Spider" and "Tich." The dignity of the ring must be maintained, but I fancy, somehow, that there will be Tiches long after the great-little founder of the clan has passed from living memory.

Imported Talent.

DRAWN BY APP.

Scots Wha Hae'nt. Altogether, names seem to have gone very queer lately, whether or not as the result of the war I do not know. It is, for example, a shock to be told by the Registrar-General of Scotland that the commonest name north of the Border is now Smith. The honoured name of Macdonald has sunk to second place, and, even so, it is the only die-hard representative of the Macs, for the other great Scottish clans seem to be those of Brown (yes, *Brown*!) Wilson, Thomson, Robertson, Campbell and Stewart. Lots of Sons, but where are all the Macs that made old Scotland's name? Times have certainly changed: can one imagine the poet singing of "Scots wha hae wi' Smith bled," or conceive anybody wanting to lay him doon and dee for Bonnie Annie Brown?

"Sorry, Madam, we're completely out of glow-worms, but I can offer you an excellent line in unit-saving fire-flies. . . ." (DRAWN BY PAT AULD.)

Jaded Judges.

So many people are taking more spouses than they are entitled to, and so many other people are dissatisfied with the spouses they already have, that our judges are breaking down under the strain. A Member of Parliament suggests a tonic for their jaded faculties. "It would be a very good thing," he says, "for the judge to go out and play a game of golf. He would be a better and fresher judge." Possibly, but would it not depend on what sort of a round the learned judge had had? I cannot think that a judge who had spent most of the morning among bunkers and bracken would take that to-know-all-is-to-forgive-all attitude which we expect of our judges. It is only too probable, I fear, that a missed 2-ft. putt on the last green would add at least another year's penal servitude to the sentence or another £500 to the damages. I think counsel for the defence would take a considerable risk if he said: "My Lord, with great respect, would your Lordship care for eighteen holes before passing sentence?" Not that I would discourage judges from the healthful influences of the golf-course; I think, however, that they may be able to find adequate opportunities, which many of us envy, during the Long Vacation.

Secret Weapon —Sensational Disclosures! We hear much about rocket guns and pilotless bombers, and there are dark hints about other little surprises which those Evil Men may have for us as the war reaches its climax. But the true nature of the secret weapon is now revealed beyond doubt. It operates thus. You order half-a-pint, as it is your constitutional right under Magna Carta to do; as you lift it, full of eager anticipation of the malty, full-bodied, blood-warming properties of wartime beer, the cup, or glass, is dashed from your lips with a loud explosion. One moment, a glass of bitter; the next,

> Ask of the winds
> that far away
> With fragments
> strewed the sea,

or, more accurately, the bar. They *say* that this is due to a defect in the manufacture of utility-toughened glass; if over-toughened, this is the revenge it takes. But I do not believe it; in this dastardly attack on national morale I see the hidden hand of Hitler, and I think there is cause for grave anxiety. Customers are advised to bring their pannikins with them.

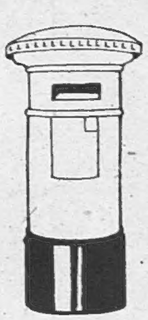
The eighty-fourth of our SERIES OF PLATES IN FULL COLOUR *published in this issue of "The Sketch" is by* DAVID WRIGHT.

"COME ON, LAD, DANCIN'S EASY. JUST 'OLD 'EM TIGHT, SAME AS A RIFLE!"

DRAWN BY FRANK REYNOLDS.

Please forward

By JOYCE DENNYS.



MY DEAR ROBERT—I don't know whether it is the East Wind, or War Weariness, or just that we've taken the slogan "Is Your Journey Really Necessary?" too literally and not been away from this place enough, but anyhow, everybody has suddenly become very bad-tempered and disagreeable, and if things go on as they are, soon nobody will be on speaking terms with anybody else.

The atmosphere at the Bridge Club, they say, is electric, and the Admiral and Colonel Simpkins are already cutting each other in the Street. Nobody quite knows what their quarrel is about, but the rumour is that Colonel Simpkins left the teapot at the A.R.P. Report Post full of tea-leaves, and the Admiral put the tea-leaves, wrapped in an abusive note, on the pillow of the Report Post bed just before Colonel Simpkins came on duty. Even little Mrs. Simpkins, that mildest and sweetest of women, had a flaming row with Mrs. Whinebite in the Fish Shop, and the Conductor and Faith are furious with Mrs. Savernack because she says they are spoiling Little No-well. On Sunday the Vicar preached a very straight sermon on Charity. The congregation listened in sullen silence, and glared balefully at each other as they shuffled out.

"'Come home with me,' said Mrs. Whinebite."

"I'm cross," said Lady B. when I met her in the Street one morning. "And don't start saying we've a great deal to be thankful for or I shall smack you, Henrietta. I *know* we have a great deal to be thankful for, but I'm still cross. I hate this Street and all the silly people who walk up and down it."

"This is terrible," I said, for it is always our dear Lady B. who keeps happy and good-tempered, no matter how unpleasant everybody else is.

"Now don't begin saying you don't feel cross too," said Lady B., glaring at me.

"Well, I'm practically always cross in the Street," I said, "especially in an East Wind, but as a matter of fact, I don't feel particularly cross at the moment."

"Oh, Henrietta, how tiresome of you!"

"I'm sorry, Lady B., but that's the way it is."

Just then Mr. Whinebite passed. "How's your lumbago, Mr. Whinebite?" I said politely. Although Doctors' Wives are supposed to know nothing, I find people get very annoyed if I don't enquire after their diseases.

"Splendid!" said Mr. Whinebite. "I'm getting along like a two-year-old. Small thanks to your husband, though. I've been going to Doctor Rival for a month." Then he hobbled away. "You might tell Charles," he shouted over his shoulder.

"Ungrateful Swine!" I muttered, and then I said it again louder, and hoped he'd hear.

Lady B. grinned. "Now you *are* cross!" she said.

"Any objection?" I said through clenched teeth.

"None at all," said Lady B. in a strained voice.

For the first time in our lives we looked at each other with cold dislike, and then the Siren went. Everybody said, "There's the Siren," and looked up at the sky, and cocked an ear at a faint humming which was coming from the sea.

"I do *hate* the Siren," said little Mrs. Simpkins, coming out of the Butcher's, "and we live so far away."

"Come home with me," said Mrs. Whinebite, "and we'll have a cup of tea," and she tucked her hand under little Mrs. Simpkins's arm and led her away.

The humming grew louder and there was some gunfire along the coast. "I wouldn't stand about in the Street, if I were you," said the Admiral, who had appeared from nowhere in a tin hat.

Lady B. and I betook ourselves to the porch of the Bank, and Lady B. said that if the Bank received a direct hit we might, in death, be surrounded with wealth as we never had been in life.

"'Received' is an awful word," I said. "Why do things always receive direct hits instead of getting them?"

"It's a good enough word for a bomb," said Lady B.

Pop-pop-pop-pop-pop.

"Damn the Germans," I said.

Crump, crump.

"Damn the bloody Germans!" said Lady B.

Mr. Whinebite came hobbling up the Street and paused outside the Bank. "You know, Henrietta," he said earnestly, "it was only because Charles was so frightfully busy. He always said it would be a long job, and——"

"If you're going to talk about your lumbago, you'd better come in here," said Lady B. "Remember, everything that Goes Up has got to Come Down."

Mr. Whinebite joined us in the porch and went on talking about his lumbago. There were a few more Bangs and then an aeroplane flew out to sea. A minute later a Spitfire streaked across the sky in pursuit and everybody began cheering.

"Atta Boy!" shouted Mr. Whinebite, and executed a caper on the pavement, in the middle of which he uttered a loud shriek and clapped his hand to his back. I opened my mouth to say "I thought you said your lumbago was cured," but thought better of it.

"Clapped his hand to his back."

Soon after that the All Clear sounded and Lady B. and I went off to have some coffee. A little farther up the Street we saw the Admiral and Colonel Simpkins going into the Pub together, arm-in-arm, their tin hats on the backs of their heads.

"Isn't it *awful*," said Lady B., "that we have to have a German 'plane over us to stop us being disagreeable and make us realise that we have a Great Deal to Be Thankful For?"

"It may be the East Wind," I said.

"That's no excuse," said Lady B. "We ought to be extra happy and extra kind so that we can help the people who have really got something to be miserable about, and all we do is to Bite, Scratch, and Sting."

"You've said it, Boss."

"Just because you've been to an American Partee, Henrietta, there is no reason why you should cease to speak in your native tongue. But, as I was saying, we've got to mend our ways, East Wind or no. Do you remember the poem by Robert Louis Stevenson?

'If I have faltered more or less
In my great task of happiness——
Te-tum te-tum te-tum te-tum,
Te-tum te-tum te-tum te-tum,
Te-tum te-tum te-tum te-tum,
Te-tum te-tum te-tum te-tum,
Lord, thy most pointed pleasure take
And *stab* my spirit broad awake.'"

"Lady B. picked up her coffee spoon."

At the word "stab" Lady B. picked up her coffee spoon and jabbed me in my bad arm.

"All the same," I said, "I don't see how you can call a German 'plane a pleasure, pointed or otherwise."

Always your affectionate Childhood's Friend,

HENRIETTA.

WIFE AND SON OF A MIDGET SUBMARINE V.C.

MRS. DONALD CAMERON *and* IAIN, *wife and son of Lieut. Donald Cameron, V.C., R.N.R.*

Twelve-months-old IAIN *with his mother,* MRS. CAMERON, *and his grandmother,* MRS. KILPATRICK.

IAIN *enjoys the sunshine and sea breezes. There is room in his "pram" for his favourite friend, Mosken, the retriever.*

MRS. CAMERON *and* IAIN *are looking at a water-colour sketch by Lieut. Cameron, V.C., of one of Mrs. Cameron's old sailing-boats.*

MRS. DONALD CAMERON is the wife of Lieut. Donald Cameron, R.N.R., one of the two commanders of midget submarines who have been awarded the V.C. for taking their tiny craft through 50 miles of mine-guarded fjord, and inside the last defence of anti-submarine nets, to attack Germany's 41,000-ton battleship "Tirpitz" in Alten Fjord, Norway, on September 22, 1943. The awards were announced recently, when it was stated that these officers had "faced every possible hazard which ingenuity could devise." Both are prisoners of war in Germany. Mrs. Cameron, who is twenty-two, was a Wren before her marriage. She lives with her mother, Mrs. Kilpatrick.

CINEMA CAMEOS.

By C. A. LEJEUNE.

ALTHOUGH it would take a far more imaginative film than "MADAME CURIE" to put on the screen, in the space of two hours, the full implications of the discovery of radium, the new Greer Garson-Walter Pidgeon piece at the Empire is a notable addition to the library of cinema biographies. It is based on Eve Curie's biography of her mother, but covers only a small section of the book—the years between Marie Sklodovska's first meeting with her husband, Pierre Curie, and his death in a street accident.

Eve Curie herself devotes chapters to Marie's childhood and student days in Paris. These scenes are functional to the book, as showing the forces of environment and heredity that shaped the strange, patient, indomitable character of the woman. It is probably a wise decision, however, to omit them from the film. One of the trickiest things on the screen is to make a child-actor grow up into a well-known film-star.

We first meet Marie Sklodovska as a student at the Sorbonne. They call her Mlle. Sklodovska, but there is no attempt to deceive the fans. She is Greer Garson all right—Greer Miniver Garson, young, ardent and starry-eyed. Her dresses are Edwardian and not smart, but the faintest gloss of discreet lipstick gives her face the glamour we demand. It doesn't really require a faint in a physics lecture to mark her out from all the rest. The script, the cameraman, years of cumulative publicity, and, of course, Miss Garson's own talent, have already done it.

The faint, however, brings Marie to the notice of the physics professor—a little part played by the Continental actor Albert Bassermann, and very finely, too. It is my personal opinion that this man, with this part, makes most of the cast look like a bunch of dumb-crambo players at a house-party charade. It is not for nothing that Mr. Bassermann holds the Iffland Ring, which has been passed down from great stage actor to great stage actor in Germany as the symbol of the highest rank. We had been watching the veteran actor at work for perhaps two minutes when my neighbour at the preview whispered to me, "Greer 's a lucky girl." "Why?" I asked. "Look at the support she 's got," he answered. "See how Bassermann 's built her up into a personality already. She hasn't had to do anything yet. He 's been doing all the acting." Be that as it may, the Professor interests himself in the hungry, friendless and ambitious Polish girl, and introduces her to his friend, the scientist Pierre Curie (Walter Pidgeon). Dr. Curie has a beard and a laboratory. To tell the truth, he doesn't seem to do much *in* the laboratory, and what with an ebullient young American assistant (Robert Walker) banging around, it really isn't surprising. The arrival of Marie Sklodovska, however, brings springtime and serenity into the lab. In about ten minutes the scientists are man and wife. And then the story of the Curies begins in earnest.

The rest of the film is mainly occupied, as were the eleven years of the Curies' married life, with the scientists' patient and arduous search for radium, which gave the world a new element, and earned the discoverers a joint Nobel Prize. History, I believe, has never agreed to distinguish between the relative contributions of Pierre and Marie to this piece of research. Eve Curie herself, scrupulously impartial, although she can scarcely have known her father, who died when she was a small child—Eve Curie, I say, writes of the partnership as follows:

"We cannot and must not attempt to find out what should be credited to Marie and what to Pierre during those years. It would be exactly what the husband and wife did not want. The personal genius of Pierre Curie is known to us by the original work he had accomplished before this collaboration. His wife's genius appears to us in the first intuition of discovery, the brilliant start; and it was to reappear to us again, solitarily, when Marie Curie the widow unflinchingly carried the weight of a new science and conducted it, through research, step by step, to its harmonious expansion. We therefore have formal proof that in the fusion of their two efforts, in this superior alliance of man and woman, the exchange was equal.

"Let this certainty suffice for our curiosity and admiration. Let us not attempt to separate these creatures full of love, whose handwriting alternates and combines in the working notebooks covered with formulæ, these creatures who were to sign nearly all their scientific publications together. They were to write 'We found' and 'We observed'; and when they were constrained by fact to distinguish between their parts, they were to employ this moving locution . . . '*one of us.*'"

It is the current tendency of the schools, I am told, to suggest Pierre Curie as the moving spirit. The film, naturally, gives most of the glory to Marie, the title-rôle and the woman star; although there will not be lacking those who feel, as they did in "Mrs. Miniver," that Walter Pidgeon's generous under-playing of the husband is one of the film's most persuasive assets.

At all events, whichever school of thought you uphold, I feel sure that you will be stirred by the scenes in which the Curies work together towards their tremendous discovery. The film pays us the rare compliment of taking it for granted that we are not uneducated. It dares to converse in scientific terms without (much) explanation. It assumes that most of us, at some time in our lives, have been inside a laboratory, and learnt something of the use of simple instruments. It expects us to understand the ardours of the years of patient research; to share the excitement—nay, the awed ecstasy—of the pair of scientists as they approach the final experiment; when at the five-thousand-six-hundred-and-seventy-seventh evaporation, eight tons of pitchblende are reduced to a luminous stain at the bottom of a basin. It expects us to appreciate what is meant to the world by the discovery of that first decigramme of the new element—radium. And we do.

THE BEST PLAYS.

*Starred by "The Sketch." ***=highest value.*

*** "BLITHE SPIRIT" (*Duchess*). Noel Coward's play. Betty Ann Davies, Cecil Parker, Irene Browne, Beryl Measor.

*** "PINK STRING AND SEALING WAX" (*Duke of York's*). 1880 Brighton comedy. Iris Hoey, Dorothy Hyson, David Horne.

** "THE DANCING YEARS" (*Adelphi*). Ivor Novello in his romantic musical play, with Muriel Barron and Roma Beaumont.

** "THE CRADLE SONG" (*Apollo*). John Gielgud's production of Spanish play. Wendy Hiller, Frederick Leister, Muriel Aked.

** "THE LISBON STORY" (*Hippodrome*). Play with music.

** "SOMETHING IN THE AIR" (*Palace*). Musical, with Jack Hulbert, Cicely Courtneidge.

** "ARC DE TRIOMPHE" (*Phœnix*). Ivor Novello's Paris cavalcade—1906-1925—with Mary Ellis, Raymond Lovell, Peter Graves, Elisabeth Welch.

** "PANAMA HATTIE" (*Piccadilly*). Musical comedy, with Bébé Daniels, Richard Hearne, Max Wall, Ivan Brandt, Claude Hulbert.

** "STRIKE A NEW NOTE" (*Prince of Wales*). George Black's revue, with the rising generation and Sid Field.

** "MY SISTER EILEEN" (*Savoy*). American slapstick with Sally Gray, Coral Browne, Max Bacon.

** "ARSENIC AND OLD LACE" (*Strand*). Witty, murderous farce. Lilian Braithwaite, Mary Jerrold, Naunton Wayne, Frank Pettingell, Edmund Willard.

** "WHILE THE SUN SHINES" (*Globe*). Rattigan's inter-allied complications without tears. Jane Baxter, Ronald Squire, Hugh McDermott.

** "SWEETER AND LOWER" (*Ambassadors*). Second edition of "Sweet and Low" revue: Hermione Gingold and Henry Kendall.

** "JUNIOR MISS" (*Saville*). Comedy with the accent on youth. Joan White, Peggy Cummins.

** "IT'S TIME TO DANCE" (*Lyric*). With Jack Buchanan, Fred Emney, Elsie Randolph.

** "THERE SHALL BE NO NIGHT" (*Aldwych*). Wonderful acting by the Lunts in Robert Sherwood play.

* "A SOLDIER FOR CHRISTMAS" (*Wyndham's*). Light comedy: Joyce Barbour, Robert Beatty.

* "THE DRUID'S REST" (*St. Martin's Theatre*). Emlyn Williams's light comedy, with Gladys Henson, Michael Shepley.

* "AN IDEAL HUSBAND" (*Westminster*). Donat's ideal Wilde revival. Irene Vanbrugh, Martita Hunt, Esme Percy.

* "THIS TIME IT'S LOVE" (*Comedy*). Comedy from the French: George Desmond, Ellen Pollock, Charles Heslop, Beryl Mason.

* "SHE FOLLOWS ME ABOUT" (*Garrick*). Farce. Robertson Hare, Basil Radford, Catherine Lacey, Joyce Heron.

* "LOVE FOR LOVE" (*Haymarket*). Congreve comedy with John Gielgud, Yvonne Arnaud, Leslie Banks, Leon Quartermaine.

* "TEN LITTLE NIGGERS" (*Cambridge*). Agatha Christie's thriller. Linden Travers, Allan Jeayes, Terence de Marney.

* "ACACIA AVENUE" (*Vaudeville*). Comedy. Gordon Harker, Hubert Gregg, Dorothy Hamilton, Megs Jenkins.

* "THE LOVE RACKET" (*Victoria Palace*). High-speed musical with Arthur Askey and Carol Raye.

* "HALFWAY TO HEAVEN" (*Princes*). Bobby Howes, Sydney Howard, Betty Stockfield, J. H. Roberts.

PANTOMIME.

"HUMPTY DUMPTY" (*London Coliseum*). Pat Kirkwood, Nervo and Knox, Naughton and Gold.

N.B.—While we shall always do our best to keep this list up to date, we cannot hold ourselves responsible for any errors which may occur. Consult your daily paper; ring up the theatre to avoid disappointment.

Warner's "NORTHERN PURSUIT" *(Regal) concerns attempted Nazi sabotage of the Canadian war effort. Six Nazi ski-running fliers are landed by submarine on the Hudson Bay coast. An avalanche overwhelms all but the leader, Colonel Hugo von Keller* (HELMUT DANTINE), *who escapes from the concentration camp to which he is sent.*

Steve Wagner (ERROL FLYNN), *in trouble under wrongful suspicion of subversive activities, angrily leaves the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. He gets in touch with Keller, who has a bomber and crew hidden in an abandoned mine. Keller threatens Steve, but after a fight, the latter boards the aircraft, kills the crew, and parachutes to safety, leaving Keller to crash.*

"Madame Curie" is a good and sensible film on a tremendous theme, which just misses being a great film by over-sentimentalisation. The real Curies were obviously as devoted a couple as ever lived, but they were too serious about their work to be idyllic. I suppose it is inevitable that Greer Garson will gather another award for her Madame Curie. She is charming, nicely-spoken and intelligent, even if she rarely suggests the Polish woman with the "immense pale forehead" and hands "ruined by acids" of Eve Curie's early memories.

It is obviously mere caprice to wonder what Garbo, who was the original nominee for Madame Curie, would have done with the part. By George, though, what possibilities there are in the idea!

While we are on the subject of Greer Garson, and before I pass on to the rather painful topic of the other new pictures, I suggest you drop in and have another look at Miss Garson's first film, "GOOD-BYE, MR. CHIPS," which is reissued this week.

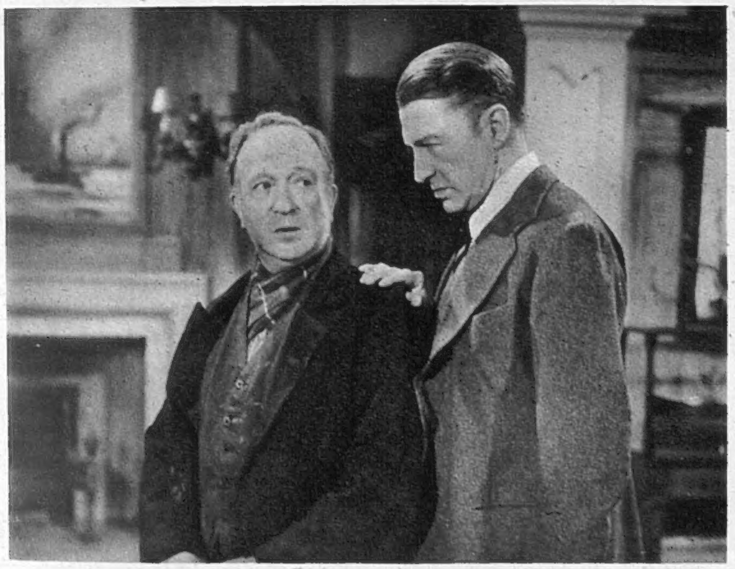
It is customary to claim, when an old film is brought out again from its dusty tins, that this is the direct result of "public demand." In the case of "Good-bye, Mr. Chips," the phrase is no euphemism. Thousands of people in these islands do want to see it again. "Mr. Chips" is over five years old now, but it carries its years well. It has a human theme, and a dry, spare perceptive script. Robert Donat's performance is a model of love and integrity, and Miss Garson, in her first short film rôle, has the promise and freshness of an April day. The film may be a sentimentalisation of school life; but then, youth must always be a sentimental topic to the warm-hearted mature.

"Good-bye, Mr. Chips," I should have said, is essentially a film for the higher age groups, the ex-schoolboys and ex-schoolgirls with slightly greying hair. But the sternest fifteen-year-old I know tells me that it is his favourite picture, and exactly applicable to a certain famous public school, so it may be that I under-estimate it.

I can no longer defer the moment when I must talk about the other new films. There are three of them, all British. "THE HUNDRED POUND WINDOW" (Warners), with Frederick Leister, is a wartime film about a small clerk who gets innocently involved in a Black Market ring. It is well-meaning and innocuous, but there is no need to drop everything and hurry to see it. In fact, there is no need to drop anything.

"BEES IN PARADISE" (New Gallery), with Arthur Askey, involves the Little Man, as an airman, in amative adventures on an island exclusively populated by women. It is the sort of thing that might well make a radio comedian wonder why he ever left the nice, safe, avuncular atmosphere of the B.B.C. studios.

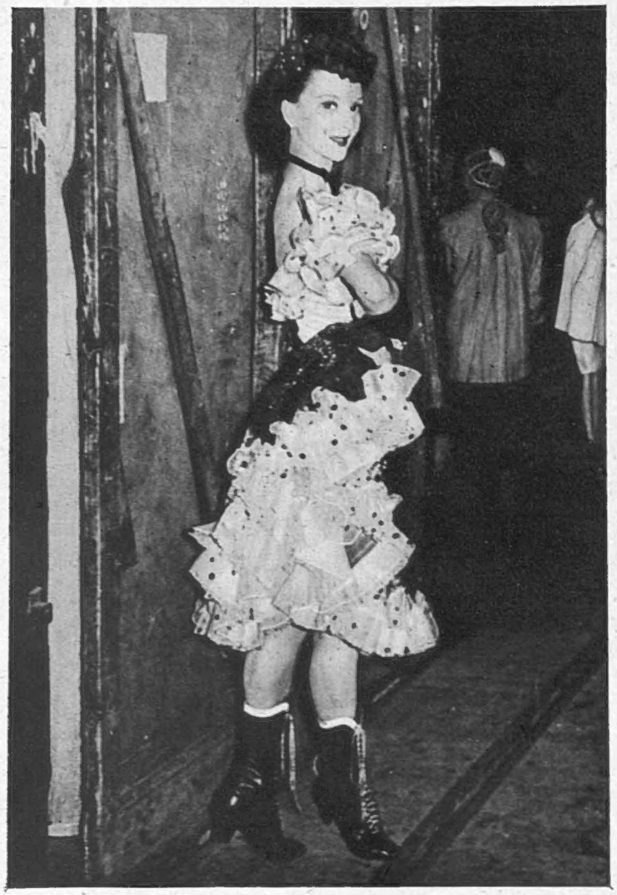
"TIME FLIES" (Gaumont and Marble Arch), curiously stated to be "based on the theories of famous modern scientists, notably Einstein and J. W. Dunne," takes Tommy Handley back in a Time Ball to the Court of Queen Elizabeth. There is one thing that can be said about "Time Flies." It is as clean as a whistle. But long before the end of the film my companion, an ardent "Itma" fan, got to his feet with the muttered apology, "I go. I don't come back."



CLIVE BROOK *stars in* "*The Shipbuilders*" *(New Gallery, March 12), which, opening in 1931, covers the slump years, and the closing of Pagan's* (CLIVE BROOK) *shipyard. Danny* (MORLAND GRAHAM), *shipwright, was Pagan's last-war batman. In 1941 life returns to the Clyde, Pagan's yard reopens, working at full pressure for the new war.*

RKO Radio's "*The Fallen Sparrow*" *(London Pavilion, March 10) has* JOHN GARFIELD *starring as Kit, an American back from Spain's Civil War after severe mental torture in a prison camp. Sleuthing after the murderer of the friend who helped him escape, he moves in smart circles, makes love to three women whom he suspects, including co-star* MAUREEN O'HARA *as Toni.*

WAR CHIEFS, WEDDINGS, PLAYERS:



Dancer DIANA GOULD *has been in Cairo, playing in "The Merry Widow" with Cyril Ritchard and Madge Elliott. She's Admiral Harcourt's stepdaughter.*

COLONEL GEORGE C. GORDON-LENNOX, *aged thirty-five, commanding a battalion of the Grenadier Guards at Carroceto, successfully directed a battle from a mattress, where he lay wounded.*

LIEUT. ANDREW HUGHES-ONSLOW, *The Black Watch, eldes son of Captain O. Hughes-Onslow, married* MISS BETTY LEE *W.A.A.F., daughter of Colonel M. G. Lee, and of Lady Rossmore at Windsor.*

GROUP OFFICER C. WOODHEAD *(l.) and* GROUP OFFICER P. C. GREIG *are appointed Deputy Directors of the W.A.A.F., the former to advise on matters of organisation and the latter on personnel.*

AIR MARSHAL SIR RODERIC HILL, K.C.B., M.C., A.F.C., *is the chief of the new Air Defence of Great Britain, the name by which the organisation for the air defence of this country is now known.*

CAPT. CLARK GABLE *(l.) at the christening by film actress* IRENE DUNNE *of the s.s. "Carole Lombard," the Liberty ship named after his screen-star wife, who was killed two years ago in a 'plane crash.*

CAPT. P. PORTEOUS, V.C. *(l.) was best man when* LIEUT. MICHAEL F. BURNES *Commandos, son of the late Mr. J. F. W. Burness, married* MISS MARY MARGAR TIMMIS, W.R.N.S., *daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Colin Timmis, at Lewes.*

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS.

CAPTAIN THE MARQUESS DOURO, *son of the Duke of Wellington, married* MISS DIANA RUTH McCONNEL, *daughter of Major-General D. F. McConnel, G.O.C. Palestine and Transjordan, in Jerusalem.*

FL.-LT. HOWARD CLEVELAND, R.C.A.F., *and* FL.-LT. SCHERF, R.A.A.F., *shot down over France a huge five-engined Heinkel glider-tug which was towing two gliders.*
[COPYRIGHT R.C.A.F.]

MAJOR R. MATHEW, *60th Rifles, younger son of the late Major-General Sir C. M. Mathew, married* MISS JOAN L. BRUCE, *daughter of Mr. J. S. Bruce, at the King's Chapel of the Savoy.*

MISS STELLA DUGGAN, *daughter of the late Mr. Julian Duggan and of Mrs. Duggan, of Buenos Aires, is engaged to Mr. William Mabane, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food.*

LADY TEDDER, *wife of the Deputy Supreme Allied C.-in-C., discussing with* MR. GORDON HARKER *the "Acacia Avenue" matinée fixed for March 10 in aid of her Invasion Malcolm Clubs (named after the late Wing Cdr. Malcolm, V.C.) in the Mediterranean area.*

ROBERT HELPMANN, *the well-known dancer and actor, as* HAMLET *in the Old Vic Company production at the New Theatre. He is shown in the scene with the Players. Pamela Brown is the Ophelia.*

GENERAL DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER, *Supreme Allied Commander (standing), and* AIR CHIEF-MARSHAL SIR ARTHUR TEDDER, *his Deputy, were snapped watching an American armoured unit on invasion manœuvres.*

During her lunch Mme. Kollontay receives an urgent telegram. On the wall are specimens of the newest porcelain products of the Soviet.

The Soviet Ambassador to Stockholm likes to arrange the spring tulips and other flowers herself.

Meal-times are not sacred to food alone, for Mme. Kollontay eats while she dictates letters to her secretary. Her favourite cocktail is made of carrot-juice.

In the green drawing-room of her house in Stockholm this is H.E.'s favourite corner. Inset is a portrait of her beautiful Finnish-born mother.

WE TAKE OFF OUR HAT TO—

MADAME KOLLONTAY, Russia's envoy in Sweden, for being the only woman Ambassador in the world, and a maker of history.

WHILE certain women of other countries are permitted to enjoy diplomatic privilege, MME. ALEXANDRA MIKHAILOVA KOLLONTAY, Soviet Ambassador to Stockholm, is the only woman in the world to be accorded the full status of Ambassador. It was she who last week handed to ex-Premier J. K. Paasikivi Russia's armistice terms to Finland—a leading figure in negotiations which might have such vastly greater repercussions than the question of war or peace for Finland. Mme. Kollontay's diplomatic career began in 1923 as the Soviet Government's political and trade representative in Norway. She was an instant success, hard-headed in spite of her femininity, and an energetic negotiator. In 1930 she was sent as Russia's envoy to Sweden, and there she has remained. A flamboyant personality, in her youth a Russian revolutionary figure, daughter of a Tsarist officer, General Domontovich, red-headed Mme. Kollontay has always dressed handsomely—on Paris dresses rich jewels partnered the Workers' Red Badge. "... What I wear has nothing to do with my feelings," she says. But she entertained revolutionary workers in her splendid house, discarded Society for the workers, and her husband for a Russian matelot, her second husband. Stalin consults her, and she was peacemaker in the 1939-40 Russo-Finnish War. She speaks English, French, German and Swedish. American statesman Sumner Welles spoke of her as "that brilliant and able figure," and it is through balanced and well-informed judgment that Mme. Kollontay has captured the world's admiration. [PHOTOGRAPHS BY K. W. GULLERS, OF STOCKHOLM.]

GURKHA V.C.: SUBADAR LALBAHADUR THAPA.

SUBADAR LALBAHADUR THAPA, *2nd King Edward VII.'s Own Gurkha Rifles, Indian Army, is the Gurkha officer who was awarded the V.C. last year for his exploit of unsurpassed bravery on the night of April 5-6, 1943, during the silent attack on the Rass-el-Zouai feature. He led a small party up a steep gully and up the cliffs of the arena under withering fire, and his outstanding leadership and gallantry were responsible for the capture of the all-important objective. With his kukri and revolver Subadar Thapa personally killed six of the enemy. He was invested with the V.C. by his Majesty at Buckingham Palace last September.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY KARSH, OF OTTAWA.

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GOLDILEGS MARLENE, QUEEN OF BAGHDAD DANCERS:

The gilding of MARLENE DIETRICH: *It takes a full hour to apply the golden paint, and another hour to remove it by means of scrubbing with wood alcohol.*

Marlene, as the Queen of Baghdad Dan
draperies fly gracefully round, but have

The Queen of Baghdad Dancers in a sensational da
in love with a beggar, under t

MARLENE DIETRICH has been a movie star for thirteen years, famous for her beauty, her mysterious glamour and her lovely legs, but in spite of the last-named feature she had never been cast as a dancer. This omission is remedied in her new picture, "Kismet," in which she appears as what "Life," in describing the photographs, calls "a reasonable facsimile of the sort of harem dancer U.S. troops in exotic corners of the world unfortunately never see." She wears a marvellous costume of jewels and chiffon; and has her hair dressed in a most complicated style which takes an hour and a half to arrange. It's contrived with her own locks, and a

[*Continued opposite*

N.B. A Coloured plate is inserted in this issue.

THE DIETRICH, GILDED FOR NEW FILM "KISMET."

giving one of her numbers. The chiffon carefully controlled by Hollywood censors.

Four coats of gold paint have to be applied each morning. The studio first made Marlene wear full-length gold-chain trousers, but the chains kept breaking, so it had to be paint.

the marble steps. She is a nautch girl who falls pression that he is a prince.

Continued.]

switch wound round a 6-in. horse-hair cone. But the most thrilling part of her costume is provided by her goldilegs effect. Her famous ankles and limbs are covered with four coats of shimmering golden paint which takes an hour to apply, and an hour to get off, but gives an effect well worth the trouble. Hollywood censors gave the picture the once-over and laid down the ruling that Marlene must not be referred to as a "harem queen," and that her habitat was not to be called a "harem," but "the women's quarters." They also kept a watchful eye on the way her chiffon draperies flew around during her numbers, so that the picture should not fall below the highest standard of propriety.

" Prix au détail." W.A.A.F. OFFICERS study the day's prices chalked on the board at El Biar market, with a view to their Mess.

On a shopping expedition outside Algiers are (l. to r.): Section Officer U. M. Robertson, pre-war cookery expert; Section Officer J. Woods, married to a Fleet Air Arm officer; F/O. S. A. W. Culverwell, of Douglas, Lanarkshire.

Above: Section Officer M. Duff, of Shrewsbury, enjoys a game of barter for some onions at El Biar market for the W.A.A.F. Mess.

Left: Section Officer Robertson and F/O. Culverwell help local inhabitants at a near-by nursery to pick chrysanthemums for market.

Oranges for sale at Maison Carrée, a market in the suburbs of Algiers. L. to r.: Section Officer Robertson, Section Officer Woods and F/O. Culverwell.

W.A.A.F. officers get a shoe-shine in an Algiers street. Left: Section Officer Roberts, of Birmingham, and Section Officer Booth, of Nottingham. Note the Fighting French symbol on the wall behind them.

OFF DUTY WITH THE W.A.A.F.s IN NORTH AFRICA.

AFTER the fall of Tunisia several W.A.A.F. OFFICERS flew out direct from England to take up their duties in the North-West African theatre of war. Some of them are doing code and cypher work, others photographic interpretation, besides various special jobs. A few of them engaged on codes and cyphers live in a picturesque French villa just outside Algiers. Here they work on day and night watches, and when off duty they enjoy all the entertainments and relaxations of the town. Shopping locally, they can indulge in all sorts of pre-war luxuries: oranges, flowers, and fascinating products of the country.

THE NUN AND THE FOUNDLING.

This exquisitely-posed picture shows WENDY HILLER *as Sister Juana of the Cross in " The Cradle Song," at the Apollo. She is holding the foundling Teresa, whom the Enclosed Dominican nuns have decided to adopt. The baby has been given into her special charge, and becomes the reminder and the consolation for the motherhood which she has renounced. John Gielgud has directed the revival of the beautiful comedy by Gregorio and Maria Martinez Sierra with great skill; and the tender pathos of the play is most moving.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN VICKERS.

BRILLIANT SECOND EDITION: AT THE

" *Thanks, Yanks, for just being here, and spreading good cheer* " : HERMIONE GINGOLD ; *and* HENRY KENDALL, *as the Statue of Liberty.*

" *Vienna Lingers On* " : *Fritzi* (HERMIONE GINGOLD) *asks* BONAR COLLEANO *and* RICHARD CURNOCK, " *Which of you two gentlemen is Ivor Novello?* "

" *If I'd only never taken up the 'cello, I'd walk beside you in the usual way* " : HERMIONE GINGOLD *burlesques celebrities in* " *'Cello Solo.* "

" *Hello, Hello, Hello! Oh, it's old Blenkinsop!* " HENRY KENDALL *is reminded that he is on fire-watching.* ILENA SYLVA *is the wife.*

"SWEETER AND LOWER," the second edition of the Ambassadors Theatre Revue, is as brilliant, as pointed, and as full of witty burlesques of the well-known as is possible. A number of the best of the original numbers have been retained, and there is good measure of new items, with Hermione Gingold and Henry Kendall to put them over big.

" *Services Rendered: Part I.* " *The Dresser* (GRETCHEN FRANKLIN), *Major Willis of the Guards* (HENRY KENDALL), *and Charmaine* (HERMIONE GINGOLD).

EVEN "SWEETER AND LOWER" AMBASSADORS.

GEORGE CARDEN, EDNA WOOD, GRETCHEN FRANKLIN, BONAR COLLEANO *and* THE GIRLS *in "Mr. Harding," a delightfully gay and decorative number.*

"I feel all that it needs is a dash of Sylphides, some Tchaikovsky and Margot Fonteyn": HERMIONE GINGOLD *takes off Helpmann's "Hamlet."*

"Say, Duchess, who's the dame?"—"That's not the Dame, that's the Principal Boy": BONAR COLLEANO *as the U.S. private at the Panto. with* HENRY KENDALL.

"Services Rendered: Part II." Rear-Commodore Beatrice Wilberforce (HERMIONE GINGOLD) *and Alexis Nokemova* (HENRY KENDALL).

"Wall Flowers": YVONNE JACQUES, MARY IRWIN *and* PAULINE FRASER *sing "Cheering the boys who are winning the war, For that's what Pin-up Girls are for."*

HERMIONE GINGOLD has a superb "take-off" of Robert Helpmann's "Hamlet," just produced at the New Theatre, and is seen in our photograph as Helpmann in the Players Scene.——"Perchance to Dream" is an exceedingly funny sketch presenting Ilena Sylva, a wife who longs to get to sleep, and a dilatory husband, who at last gets to bed—and is then called out for his fire-watching.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN VICKERS.

THE SERVANT PROBLEM FROM A NEW ANGLE: "STANDING ROOM ONLY."

Lee (FRED MacMURRAY) and Jane (PAULETTE GODDARD) can't find hotel accommodation, so go out as cook and butler. Jane forgets to cook the dinner for her employers, so Lee tosses up flapjacks.

Jane Rogers, who has engaged herself and Lee Stevens in domestic service, pulls some rather rough stuff when she has to wait on her employer.

Jane Rogers and Lee Stevens are only masquerading as cook and butler, but their love-affair is the real thing. Jane has got her man all right.

The lack of hotel accommodation in wartime Washington is the start of the trouble. Lee and Jane have arrived on business and just can't get a roof over their heads.

"STANDING ROOM ONLY," due at the Plaza shortly, is a gay, farcical comedy about life in wartime Washington. Jane Rogers, by a display of feminine duplicity, manages to go with Lee Stevens on a business trip to Washington to see the all-important Mr. Ritchie. There is no room in any hotel, so Jane has the bright idea of hiring herself and Lee out as cook and butler to the wealthy Cromwells. Then the fun starts, and grows wilder and wilder till a happy solution is finally reached.

THE IRRESISTIBLE EILEEN.

SALLY GRAY *plays the title-rôle in "My Sister Eileen," at the Savoy. Both the Sherwood girls, sister heroines of this American comedy by Joseph Fields and Jerome Chodorov, are devastating, but Eileen is completely irresistible, and her magical charm lands the pair in many a farcical muddle. The evening performances of the show, by the way, now start at 5.30 p.m. and are over by 7.45 p.m.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY FRED DANIELS.

THE LITERARY LOUNGER.

By L. P. HARTLEY.

"JOURNEY AMONG WARRIORS" is a record of Mdlle. Eve Curie's tour of the battlefields of our war, and of some countries that feed them. It took her five months. She left New York by aeroplane in November, 1941; she left New Delhi, on the return journey, in April of 1942. America was at peace when she went away, at war when she came back. Her route took her through equatorial Africa to Cairo; from Cairo through the Middle East, Beirut, Baghdad and Teheran, to Moscow; from Moscow through India, with a detour to Mandalay and Rangoon, to Chungking and Chengtu, in China; then back to India and Delhi, where, as General Wavell's guest, she made a considerable stay. The daughter of world-famous parents, and herself a writer of distinction, she found herself recognised and welcomed everywhere she went.

"Journey Among Warriors" is the best book of its kind that I have read. Mdlle. Curie has many qualifications for her task. She has a constitution, apparently, of iron—nothing tires her; an equally unflagging intelligence, gifted with super-normal powers of assimilation, both for facts and impressions, as well as an instinct for classification; and the ability to write English so well that, though cast in the mould of journalism, her book often reads like literature. Besides these advantages she has others, more accidental. Her father was French, her mother Polish, she has many links with England, and America was at one time her home; thus she is automatically endowed with a number of points of view, and a breadth of sympathy, beyond the reach of ordinary people, to supplement her critical intelligence.

Nationalism and Liberty. She has also two great enthusiasms, for nationalism and for liberty. I put them in that order because, though liberty is the guiding principle of her mind, and the criterion to which she refers her opinions, love of country is the dynamo which moves her. She is moved not only by the sentiment of nationalism in herself — her patriotic feeling for France and Poland—but also by the spectacle of nationalism in other countries. In Russia, where she was given opportunities of seeing for herself, especially in the battle areas, that few foreigners have enjoyed, it is the people's four-square nationalism, their 100 per cent. war-effort, that impresses and almost intoxicates her. Left-wing in feeling, she was predisposed to sympathise with the Russians, but it is their bearing in war that moves her to wholesale admiration. This admiration cannot always, she implicitly admits, be reconciled with her love of liberty. For instance, when in China, she "met many people with different opinions who openly spoke their minds," and concluded that "Chinese authoritarianism could not be really oppressive. In Russia I had not, *even once*, discussed the Soviet Government with a citizen of the U.S.S.R. A citizen willing or daring to have a controversial talk about Russian régime with a foreigner was simply not to be found." Conversation on such a subject had to be "in the line."

Politics in India. Only in India does her enthusiasm for resurgent nationalism falter: she cannot endorse the demand of Congress for India's immediate political independence. But she defends and explains this apparent inconsistency by saying that, as far as she could judge, the demand does not come from the people at large, but from the politicians. Nevertheless, her conversations with Mr. Jinnah, Pandit Nehru, and, above all, with Gandhi, are not only among the most fascinating in the book, they show her memory at its most retentive and her mind at its most impartial.

She was in India at the moment when the Cripps proposals were being discussed. Russia and India are the countries that stand out from her book, but of the rest she leaves unforgettable glimpses and impressions. Her mind, as befits an observer with scientific training, is wonderfully free from petty preoccupations; she never complains of the many hardships of her journey.

The Then and the Now. The pleasure that one gets (or hopes to get) from allegorical novels, or novels in which reality is regarded from an unaccustomed angle, or novels in which Time does not unroll itself in the conventional way, like leaves torn off a calendar—that pleasure is mitigated by the fear of not quite knowing what the allegory means, or how the author's peculiar attitude to reality or time is to be related to normal experience. Mr. Louis Marlow is an extremely able writer, with an imagination that takes him far beyond mere cleverness; and the difficulty in "The Devil in Crystal" is not so much in the idea itself as in its working out. Nearly everyone has had, dreaming or waking, moments of clairvoyance; if waking (perhaps if sleeping, too) usually following a prolonged physical or mental strain. But for most people these moments do not last. Anyone living in 1943 might slip back in consciousness twenty-one years, and be glad to, until he found that his memory was still more or less intact, and that he knew what unpleasantness was in store for him. This is what happened to James Tidburnholme, born in 1892, an attractive man, and "a gentleman according to his own definition of that word as 'a man who doesn't mind its being said that he isn't one.'" We can imagine him slipping back to the despised but not wholly disagreeable '20's; what is confusing is that he stays there, with one or two uneasy sorties into the present, until the end of the book. Jemmy, as his women friends called him, and they were many, was an intellectual amorist as well as a good fellow, much invited to parties; and many of the past scenes which he revisits, painfully though partially armed with knowledge of the future, are the lunches and dinners and other engagements he kept, or did not keep, with women at that time. His gift of prophecy was as embarrassing to them as to him; but its limitations, its lapses from omniscience, which sometimes seem arbitrary, are the material from which Mr. Marlow constructs this brilliant study on the theme of the "second chance."

Mr. Marlow's writing shows an intellectual maturity, a wide background of culture, assimilated and enjoyed, which are rare in writers of fiction. Philosopher and man-of-the-world, he does not resort to fantasy, or to much technical analysis of Jemmy's queer psychic state: his treatment is on the surface realistic and his descriptions of the food and drink of those far-off days make one's mouth water. Yet he successfully performs the very difficult feat of making the present and the past run parallel with each other, like two aspects of experience only needing a small adjustment to make them identical. The intellectualism of his outlook never resolves itself, I think, in mysticism; its rule is absolute, and it governs even the emotional relationships of his characters.

Symbolist and Mystic. Mr. William Sansom, on the other hand, is a fantasist, a symbolist, and a mystic. At times the stories in "Fireman Flower" remind us of Mr. De la Mare's, not in their execution, for that is utterly different, but in their power to create mood and suggest atmosphere by symbols. But they do not have his static quality, as of a distant scene reflected in a mirror; they are full of movement and anxiety and stress; and, as far as they are derivative, they derive from the novels of Kafka. "The Peach-House Potting-Shed," "The Forbidden Lighthouse," "In the Maze" and "The Long Sheet"—all stories I found rather obscure—seem to foreshadow the plight of the soul, striving to find a meaning in and behind the huge, cloudy symbols which spring up in its path. The nightmare feeling, so marked in Kafka, of ever struggling nearer to reality through layers and layers of appearances, is very strong in these stories. Kafka's besetting symbol of serried ranks of officials intervening to hinder the soul on its quest finds a parallel in one of Mr. Sansom's simpler stories, "The Inspector." This story has fewer layers of superimposed meanings, and can be read as an almost straightforward satire on bureaucracy.

All Mr. Sansom's stories are symbolical, but he puts symbolism to many uses, and there is no sense of monotony in his work. Nor does he always see the universe as a kind of conspiracy of officials systematically cheating the soul of the knowledge it craves; often the appearances he describes are as chaotic and illogical as they are in dreams. Nor, which is more important, does he see the soul as eternally frustrated: Fireman Flower, at the end of his search for the "seat" of the fire, is granted a sense of union with reality, and some of the captives in "The Sheet" (that extraordinary tale) find the spiritual reward they have been working for.

Mr. Sansom's writing is a strange mixture of the good and the less good. He has remarkable freshness of eye and mind, an immense vocabulary, and unexpected touches that startle and delight. But his work is like a spring torrent, it roars and overwhelms, but knows no moderation. The tension is continuous, and the reader feels tired and buffeted and longs for a lull.

Misleading Pointers. "Pointer to a Crime" is modestly but not inaptly named, for though there are a good many pointers away from the crime in Mr. Fielding's story, there are not many looking towards it. Even Inspector Pointer himself does not hit on the solution till nearly the end; but a large part of the investigation into who murdered Annabelle Robson (and the rest) is carried out by other sleuths, some of them distinctly shady. Before the end, nearly everyone seems to be in disguise. The story moves between Lincolnshire, London and Devonshire, and ends in a very convenient air raid. The detection interest is extremely complex. I regretted the murder of the dog; it was one of the nicer characters. Of the human beings, by far the most interesting is Zilla Ash. Hers is a first-rate portrait, and her conversations with her mother show the author's unusual gift for dialogue at its best.

BOOKS REVIEWED.

Journey Among Warriors. By Eve Curie. (*Cape; 15s.*)
The Devil in Crystal. By Louis Marlow. (*Faber and Faber; 6s.*)
Fireman Flower. By William Sansom. (*Hogarth Press; 8s. 6d.*)
Pointer to a Crime. By A. Fielding. (*Collins; 8s. 6d.*)

THE LONDON GALLERIES.

AGNEW'S, 43, Old Bond Street.
71st Exhibition of English Water-colours.

FINE ART SOCIETY, 148, New Bond Street.
Dürer, Rembrandt and some Modern Etchings. Also Early English Water-colours.

REDFERN, 20, Cork Street.
Paintings by Christopher Wood and V. Khmeluk; Water-colours by Derwent Lees. March 2-April 1.

NATIONAL GALLERY, Trafalgar Square.
Paintings by Official War Artists. Canadian War Paintings.

Busman's holiday. . . . "Mrs. Mopp" listens to one of her own recordings.

PRESENTING "MRS. MOPP" OF ITMA.

PICTURES of the chattering char of ITMA—"Mrs. Mopp"—happily follow those of her Boss, Tommy Handley, in our last issue. In private life she is MISS DOROTHY SUMMERS, with a delightful house in Devonshire Terrace, where the photographs were taken, and where her background is hardly suggestive of her celebrated appeal "Can I do yer naow, Sir?"! Mrs. Mopp's "appearance" on the air produces roars of applause from the lucky people who manage to get tickets to the B.B.C. studio for ITMA, for she is one of the leading and most popular of the fictitious characters in the rackety surrealist programme. Miss Summers' special hobby is rug-making; a large and splendid example of her art is seen in the middle photograph. And so—T.T.F.N.

A keen reader of Dickens, she has a grand collection of his books.

BACK-ROOM SAILOR.*

By N. G. STRONG.

"DEVONPORT want a dozen more officers for general duties. Take the first twelve names on this list. Alphabetical order. Well, I must be getting along. Cheero, see you Monday, Cheero, Sir—all right—I'll hold the fort—have a good leave, Sir."

Which is why, twelve hours later, a certain Wren in a certain office said to a certain fellow: "Oh, there 's a signal for you, Sir, just come over the blower" (meaning 'phone, but she was very new). "Good," said the fellow—Lieutenant Fellow, R.N.V.R., in fact—who was daily expecting an honoured summons about an anti-submarine device he 'd submitted some months before, "I expect it 's come at last." "Ay, Ay, Sir," replied the Wren, who already knew that was what you said when you didn't understand. So the Fellow read it through a few times, put in the commas, guessed at the missing words, and concluded he was being sent to an Unknown Destination called Devonport, jolly urgent, no delay, why wasn't he there already? "Ah," he thought, "I 'll get in some week-end leave on the way." So he turned up at Devonport on Monday, and the first thing was to put his name down for some leave. Then he went to report to the Captain, who was out, so saw the Secretary, who was busy, but referred him to the Assistant Secretary, who was on leave. But, at last, the Chief Writer's Wren looked up from her cross-word and took pity on him. She let him fill up a Next-of-Kin card and a Declaration of Vaccination; she made him out a Pass to a Specified Prohibited Area, namely Devonport Dockyard, and informed him he was Duty Officer for the Night. Finally, she found a copy of a signal which said that the Fellow had been appointed C.A.S.D.O. "Appointed what?" said the Fellow. "CASDO," said the Wren, looking him straight in the eye, "C-A-S-D-O." "O-er, yes," said the Fellow, "of course, yes-yes-yes," and took himself off, wondering what on earth C.A.S.D.O. stood for. Only it didn't stand for anything, 'cos the joke of it was, ha-ha, that it had only got written on the signal accidental-like when the Wren was trying out an anagram in her cross-word. Anyhow, nobody seemed to know what to do with him, but they never do, he thought. "Anyway, I 'd better get on with some work." So the next day he installed himself in an empty office and had C.A.S.D.O. painted on the door. Then he made out a stationery requisition and decorated the walls with Recognition Sheets of British Aircraft. And after arranging with the Wrens next door (there are always Wrens next door) to send him in a cup of tea whenever they made one, which seemed to be continuously, he sat back waiting for something to happen.

But all that happened was that one or two cheery souls put their heads in at the door, and said: "O, hullo! So you 're the new CASDO, are you? Come and have a drink." And a bit later one or two puzzled-looking Lesser Paymaster's Writers put their heads in at the door and said did he know, was he appointed or only attached? As he didn't seem to be on their books yet. If attached, please state duties (which is how L.P.W.s talk after a bit). And—er—hum—could he tell them—what did CASDO stand for, as they couldn't find it in the A.F.O.s? "Only attached," said the Fellow, playing for safety and speaking very sharp-like. "Special duties, very secret, just put me down as Casdo—security reasons, you know." "Ay, ay, Sir," and they withdrew smartly, pens at the ready and papers in bundles of ten.

But after that it got a bit boring, and finding the Wrens next door were all bespoke, the Fellow thought, better get to work on my U-boat weapon; suppose that 's why I 'm here. But for that he needed some men, and nobody would let him have any, being only attached. So he made a tour of the barracks and dockyard, and noted any ratings who didn't seem to be doing anything. And the next day he made another tour and noted all those who melted away at his approach. Then he made a third tour from the opposite direction and got a total bag of seven. Seven uneasy-looking dodgers who had been keeping out of the way for years and couldn't explain exactly what their jobs were. "Bin waiting for orders, Sir," they mumbled. "Right," said the Fellow; "here they are. You 're all Casdo ratings. Understand?" "Ay, ay, Sir." So he marched them off to his office and started the task of training them to his needs. But, funnily enough, it wasn't such a task after all, as the Dodgers soon found that working was much easier than dodging. And before many week-end leaves had passed he had evolved a grand machine which gave out a sort of mystic glow whenever a U-boat came within a mile of a ship; and, what's more, trained all the depth-charge throwers on it and fired them without waiting to be asked. So, sending a hastener after his stationery requisition, he cadged some pens, ink and paper off the gardener's aunt (being anxious to observe the traditions), and wrote a long report about it, profusely illustrated. Then he looked up the A.F.O.s entitled "Secret Documents and Reports Transmission of, Instructions for the," and enclosed his report in three sealed envelopes, addressed the outside one to The Management, c/o. The G.P.O.; marked the second one Secret, Not to be Opened in Error; the inside one *Most Secret*, Burn Before Reading; put it in an official bag Pattern 5, chained it to his wrist, caught the next train up to town, and dropped it through the letter-box of the Admiralty. Which comes of trying to translate Fleet Orders yourself, instead of getting a Paybob to do it for you.

Only, of course, no one at the Admiralty had a pigeon-hole marked C.A.S.D.O., so it actually got through to the Management; in fact, to the First Sea Manager's Secretary, who personally took it to the First Sea Manager. "Hrrmph," said the First S.M., who was looking at the flats opposite through his telescope at the time, "whassallthis—who 'sitfrom—C.A.S.D.O.—CASDO? Oh, yes, of course, know, very important," and he actually read about half-way through the first page. Then he rang for the Second Sea Manager, and said: "Ever heard of a fellow called Fellow?" "Only, if he 's one of the Odd-fellows," said the Second S.M., who was noted for his ready wit. "Who is he?" "C.A.S.D.O." said the First S.M. not batting an eyelid. "Quite," said the Second S.M., adding, with great presence of mind: "not one of my chaps, though." "Ho, really," said the First S.M., "then what 's he doing sending in U-boat devices; that 's your department, isn't it?" "Yes," said the Second S.M., glancing at the last page, "looks as if it might work, too. But, of course, we can't accept it. Wouldn't do to have the wrong department doing the right work." "Quite," said the First S.M., keeping a stiff upper lip, "quite." "Though, of course, there is a war on," added the Second S.M., fishing out his pipe. "Indeed!" snorted the First, screwing in his monocle; "indeed? The Admiralty don't admit it—good heavens, man, what 's that your smoking?" "It 's a pipe," said the Second, a little defiantly, "carved it myself out of one of those lumps of wood you get in the issue tobacco. Won't crack or burn. Practically indestructible. Made an awful mess of my jack-knife, though." "Hrrmph," said the First. "Well, what about this Casdo fellow Fellow?" "Well, we might just send for ORFCI and find out what department he is in," said the Second, slyly. So they sent for O.R.F.C.I. (short title: Officer Responsible for Conferring Initials), and said to him: "What department's Casdo?" "CASDO," said ORFCI, thinking quickly (in his job he often had to think quickly). "Oh, yes, of course, C.A.S.D.O. M' well, yes, mumble, at a guess; that is to say, of course, I 've got it; you mean the Chief Anti-Submarine Device Officer—that 'll be the Second Sea Manager's Department." "Told you so," said the First. "Well, I 'm blessed," said the Second. "So we can use it after all—dash it, my pipe 's on fire." "Yes," but look here, Second, I see the fellow 's only a Lieutenant. Some slip-up there. I bet one of your chaps is sitting on a list of promotions somewhere. Probably lost it by now." "Oh, for heaven's sake, man—all right—keep calm—here, I 'll throw a jug of water over you, there." "Well, all right, all *right*. It 's not as if it 's your *best* uniform. Anyway, you ought to keep your beard trimmed. Here, have a cigarette instead. Well, now we 'd better make this Fellow a Lieutenant-Commander right away. We don't want any questions asked in the House. And, after a decent interval—say a week—we 'll give him his brass hat. You 'd better see to that at once. Oh, and tell him we 're going ahead with his scheme. You know, 'Their Lordships have carefully considered. . . .' What? Yes, I did roll it myself. Well, I expect it 's the Pusser's tobacco. Anyhow, get that letter off to-day."

"Ay, ay, Sir."

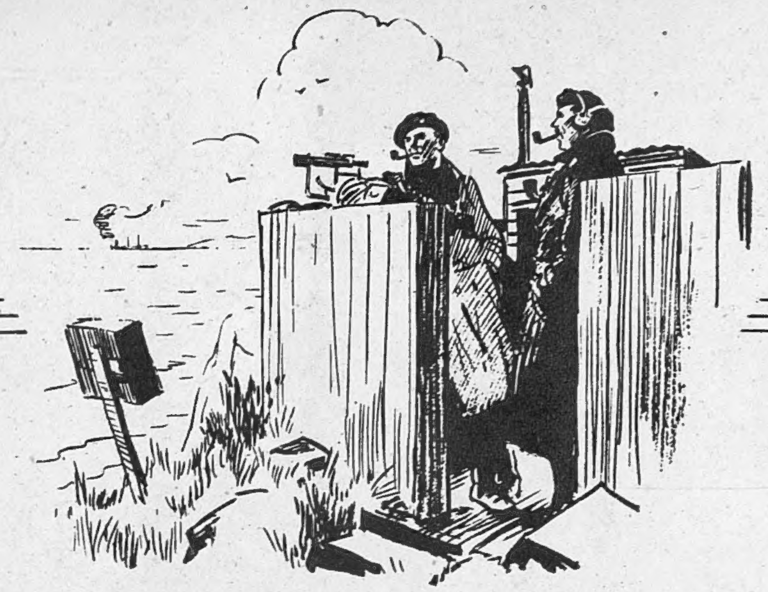
But the pity of it was that the letter wasn't addressed to Lieutenant Fellow, nor even to CASDO, but to the Chief Anti-Submarine Device Officer, who was still a figment of ORFCI'S imagination. So when the letter reached the Mail Office, the sorter had to take it to the Superintendent, who frowned and said: "All right, leave it there." And a week later, when it was still there, another one turned up which rather worried the Super. So he waded through the regulations and discovered—according to his reading, anyway—that he could keep it for six months to see if it was claimed. And since he was due to retire in three months, that suited him fine. And at the end of six months his successor also waded through the regulations and discovered, if he read aright, that it should have been opened six months before to see who it was from; *and* in the presence of three witnesses not below the rank of ordinary postman, which you can't be, anyway. But since, as was by now openly admitted by the Admiralty, there was a war on, he had only Ordinary Postwomen; so being a man of action in moments of crisis, he decided to do the deed without any witnesses at all. Which was just as well, 'cos when he saw the Second S.M.'s signature he shoved it back in the envelope, dropped it in the nearest mailbag (which happened to be marked Bombay), and put in for a transfer.

And two years later the First Sea Manager said to the Second Sea Manager: "Well, old man, we seem to be on top of the U-boat now. Thanks to that Casdo Fellow. Clever scheme that. Glad we made him a Commander. Haven't heard of him for a long time. Let 's go down to Devonport and cast him a word of praise."

But their kindly visit was wasted. At Devonport, no sign of Casdo could be found, in spite of searchings high and low by all hands. And he never was found; he had just melted away.

For, unconscious of his honours and embittered by his shabby treatment, Casdo had become—a Dodger. [THE END.]

**All the characters and incidents in this story are imaginary.*



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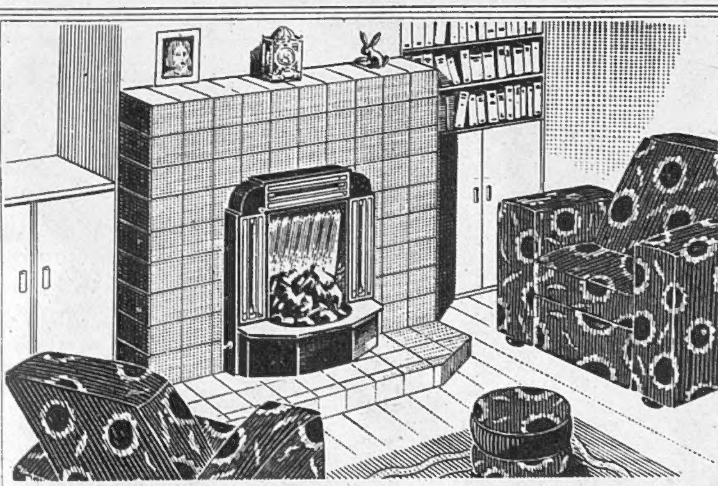

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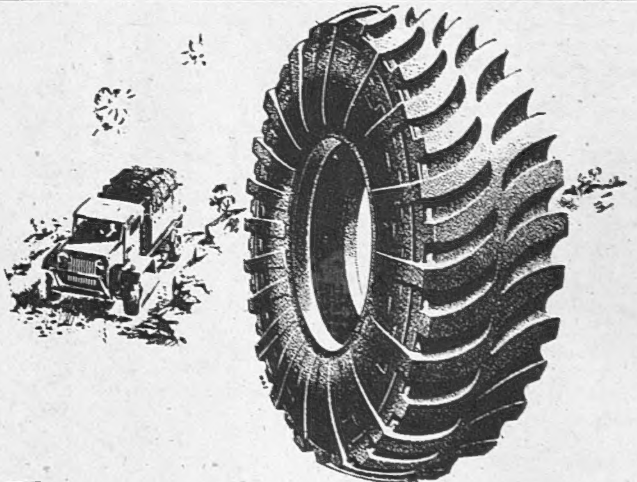

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